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FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7021
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHEHWSR/WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 003534

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/20/2016

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SUBJECT: REGIONS LAW ACTION NOW SET FOR SEPTEMBER 24

Classified by Political Counselor Margaret Scobey, reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) CoR Speaker Mahmoud al-Mashadani announced to the CoR September 20 that the parliamentary bloc leaders had agreed to delay action on the region formation law until September 24. The agreement states that "we agreed on how to deal with these issues, among them the draft law on region formation and the formation of the Constitutional Review Committee (CRC), within three days." It was signed by the CoR's leadership and the political bloc leaders, including Jalal al-Din al-Sagheer (SCIRI - Shia coalition), Hadi al-Amiri (Badr Organization - Shia coalition), Adnan Duleimi (IPC -- Tawafuq - Sunni), Ayad al-Samarrai (IIP - Tawafuq), Fuad Masoum (PUK - Kurdish Alliance), and Osama an-Najafi (Iraqiyya - secular).

¶2. (C) SCIRI member Ridha Jawad Taqi confirmed to PolOffs September 20 that the major blocs had agreed to postpone the first reading of the regions law until September 24. According to Taqi, proposed legislation will contain assurances that the regions law cannot be implemented until after the constitutional review process finishes. The constitutional review process, he said, would begin in the coming days with the formation of a review committee.

¶3. (C) Taqi said he felt confident that Tawafuq would honor this agreement, noting that according to Tawafuq's leaders "most people in their bloc were comfortable with this approach, but that they needed an extra three days to keep talking with those that still had reservations.⁸ Taqi said that within the Shia coalition (UIC), every party except the Sadrist and Fadhila were supportive of the agreement. &The Sadrists are taking their usual position that the occupation must end first,⁸ he said, &and Fadhila is sitting on the fence until the last moment.⁸

¶4. (C) In a separate meeting September 20, Hamid Majeed Mousa, CoR member (Iraqiyya) and Communist Party leader, told PolCouns that Iraqiyya had also presented a draft region formation law that would not go into effect until the Constitutional Review Committee had finished its work, and would limit the size of regions to two or three governorates in the beginning. He said there is broad agreement for delaying the implementation of the region formation law until the constitutional review process ends, but that Tawafuq was still pushing for a delay of two years. According to Mousa, the various drafts of the region formation law will be referred to the legal committee on September 24, which will produce a unified draft for a first reading at a later date. He acknowledged that producing such a unified draft that could be accepted by all parties could take weeks.

¶5. (C) END COMMENT. This is the third agreement announced regarding the region formation law, joining the agreements of September 7 and September 10. It remains to be seen if the political blocs, particularly Tawafuq, will stand by this

agreement. END COMMENT.
SPECKHARD